



Testimony of Eric W. Gjede
Assistant Counsel, CBIA
Before the Committee on Labor and Public Employees
March 3, 2016

Testifying on HB 5371 AAC A Minimum Workweek of Persons Performing Janitorial or Building Maintenance Services

Good afternoon Senator Gomes, Representative Tercyak, Senator Hwang, Representative Rutigliano and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. My name is Eric Gjede and I am assistant counsel at the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA), which represents more than 10,000 large and small companies throughout the state of Connecticut.

CBIA is opposed to HB 5371.

HB 5371 would require the owner of 100,000 square feet of office space (whether in one or more locations), private or public institution of higher education, or a museum to ensure that any person providing janitorial services at these locations be guaranteed a thirty hour work week. Failure to provide this work week can lead to a penalty of \$500 for the first offense, followed by \$1,000 for each subsequent offense.

This bill is a government intrusion into the employer-employee relationship. It dictates how many work hours an employer must provide an employee, regardless of whether or not the employer can afford to provide those hours. Moreover, the most likely result is that a business will have to terminate janitorial staff in order to ensure some of the janitors meet the requirements of this law. Even if the result is less janitorial employees, employers will be required to incur the costs of keeping the lights on and doors unlocked for a longer period of time in order for a reduced number of janitors to complete the same amount of cleaning services.

Sadly, the true aim of this bill is to eliminate part-time janitorial jobs in the state and replace them with fewer full-time janitorial jobs. Simply put, those pushing for this bill believe that part-timers aren't as loyal to the organization representing them. Regardless, many people rely on these part-time janitorial jobs to supplement another income, and the state should not pursue policies that would force these people to give up their jobs.

A government fiat requiring employers provide employees with a 30 hour work week will not make that happen. The only way to do that is to lower the cost of doing business and providing employers with relief from business mandates. When a business has a healthier bottom line, they can afford to hire more employees and provide their current employees with more hours and benefits.

We strongly urge you to take no action on HB 5371.